# REPORT TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
# POINT FOUNDATION

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## INTRODUCTION

Some folks feel good about future projects, others fear we are on the wrong path. Everyone feels the pressure of the current financial crisis. It only when this is turned around that people will feel good about their work, have confidence in the future. We are in a good position to accomplish significant works. It is lack of funds that has caused the current crisis; I believe rectifying the deficit will alleviate most of people's trepidations.

Our concerns should be immediate and long term fundraising, growing and strengthening the magazine, and giving the Millenium Whole Earth Catalog (working title) the best chance of happening. And there must be a cohesiveness to all these endeavors.

## HISTORY

Events don't occur out of context. Perhaps it would be wise to flesh out a little of the story.

I came on almost a year ago with a mandate from the board to create new projects and to grow what was here; however, how to do this was left undefined. It was felt that we were going to lose a tremendous asset in Howard if he left. We said that the board would have to facilitate fundraising in the amount of $100,000 for the first year to get things started. Once started, projects should be self-sustaining. I very clearly and repeatedly stated that I could be a tool in fundraising but that I could not plan it or head it up, that the board needed to make a commitment to do that. The specific form of that commitment needed to be developed. Now I would say that a development director should have been added at some point, but when? We need projects, visions around which to raise money. To take on someone qualified would cost $$$ and indeed I was talking to several people with an eye to this: Beau Takahara, Pam Seidenman, and finally Rita Cahill. There was no approval for money to hire

someone unless they were willing to "raise" their own salary, an unacceptable option for most experienced fundraisers.

The cash crunch and rude awakening happened in November. The emergency Point board meeting was scheduled for Nov. 17 at 6 P.M. I was advised that face-to-face or voice-to-voice appeals were by far and away the most effective way to raise immediate funds, so we concocted a plan of letters to be sent to specific people and then followed by phone calls or face-to-face meetings by board members. This succeeded in raising only $22,000 (I arranged for 2 grants of $5000 each and one loan of $10,000.) The letter was written by me and then rewritten by committee; this was time-consuming, took a month to get out, and then to the best of my knowledge the letters were not followed up as planned with phone calls and face-to-face meetings.

I believe we should now take on a development director whose primary concern is ongoing fundraising. I will give all the help I can in the ways that are deemed appropriate, but we need someone more experienced than I to be the main fundraising person.

**FUTURE PLANS**

Book publishing was always foremost in plans. It seems an appropriate opportunity to pursue a new Whole Earth Catalog. The time is right, we will be leading with our strong suit, it is an excellent growth tool and certainly a worthwhile project to take on, promoting informed, responsible activism. We would upgrade our desk-top publishing hardware and software which would also serve us well for work on the magazine and other projects. Some material for the catalog would also be useful in the magazine.

So far the response from publishers has been excellent. Our advance monetary needs to do this project are quite large, so we don't as yet know where it will lead.

If US advance is not large enough we should consider:
— probe for foreign possibilities
— foundation grants to underwrite certain segments
— Apple grant of equipment
— Alternative distribution and private funding

We will be increasing staff to do WEC for a year (or more) when that's completed instead of closing it all down perhaps we could :
1) begin production on versions of Kid's WEC;
2) Plants as Teachers (another of our book projects)
3) expand some chapters in WEC into books (Taming Technology and WEC of Political Change: Grassroots Activism)
4) consider other titles
5) go bi-monthly with the WER; (Keith makes a very good case for this if we are to encourage subscriptions and newsstand growth.)

We should also consider multi-media projects, like a CD-ROM of WEC We sent the catalog proposal to Doug Carlston who will show it to the appropriate people at Broderbund to see if they are interested in or might make suggestions toward a CD-ROM product based on the new WEC. Many other possibilities need to be explored. The way in which we gather and format the information for the WEC needs to be informed by the needs of the multi-media project.

In all plans we must be circumspect about not taking on too much at any time. Best to pass up some "excellent opportunities" than to stretch staff too thin or water down content of Catalog or magazine. Keith is excellent at this type of questioning as well as determining the financial feasibility of such projects.

All the projects are designed to call more attention to the magazine which will hopefully increase circulation and bring in more profits. Maximizing promotion of the catalog can increase the chance of royalties over and above the advance.

The direct mail campaign for WER is netting positive results and should be expanded. We are also pursuing advance renewal revenues which should produce net increases in income of $70,000 in 1993.

**FUNDRAISING**

But what if the WEC project does not enable us to bring in immediate monies?

We must look into appropriate projects for immediate fundraising, and long term plans to avoid recurrences of the current situation,

and to plan appropriate exploitation of opportunities stemming from the catalog and ancillary projects. I believe we should hire a director of development who would plan and coordinate appropriate ongoing fundraising efforts. Attached is a six month plan, beginning thoughts from Rita Cahill, which project a net between $6000 and $49,600. She did not include grant monies, which would take more consideration. Marly is willing to work on these projects and indeed has been becoming familiar with the information available in the Fundraising Library. About half of her time could be allocated for this. Rita's various suggestions need to be evaluated. We need to generate other ideas for short term cash gains.

An alternative to hiring someone like Rita would be to take on a full-time staff person who would be directed by a fundraising committee which would center around specific board members. This would require a time commitment from those board members and the others who would be chosen to serve on that committee. Point's last attempt at this did not work out well, but that might have been a matter of who was chosen or inappropriate mandates given to them.

Whatever our choice it will require funding to begin. Beau suggests that we quickly see if this position might be fundable by SF Foundation. They have a funding cycle coming up and John Kreider, the director, likes to promote change. There may be other foundation or private individual funders if we come up with a convincing, cohesive plan.

The Friends of Whole Earth idea needs to be developed so it can be launched in the 25th Aniversary issue. Deadline for the text is about a month from now. We must immediately concern ourselves with the form this should take and how to best present it. One of our main resources must certainly be our readers.

Keith projects we need to net $100,000/year to cover the expense of my salary, Marly's, and our office. Currently in the book budget there is $50,000 towards the past deficit. Fundraising and new project efforts should be planned to bring in the rest if we wish to keep Marly and me working here.

## BOARD DEVELOPMENT

The board needs to redefine itself. What kind of board is appropriate to become? How can it best serve Point/Whole Earth ? What are the pay-offs for being a board member?

New blood is needed on the board:

- — A lawyer with expertise in not-for-profits
- — More active fundraisers
- — Someone connected with the multi-media industry (like Doug Carlston)
- — Editor on the board (voting or non-voting)

Some people to consider for board:

- — John Gage (Sun Microsystems, also GBN member)
- — Freddy Hahne ( a "do it" person with many years of experience on nfp boards)
- — Carolyn Garcia (on the board of the Rex Foundation)
- — Marty Krasny
- — Lawrence Wilkinson (multi media connected/GBN)

Any of these people if not themselves available to sit on the board might have interesting suggestions of others to consider. We should solicit additional names from board and staff.

More board/staff interaction needs to occur. Should we establish a "staff representative" to attend board meetings?

The board needs to understand that in general the staff feels that the hiring of me and the commitment to funds that were not available as well as the severance package for Kelly was irresponsible. There needs to be a belief that the board is reforming itself in ways that will promote communication and responsible decision making.

## STAFF MORALE

In general, I believe improving the monetary situation is what it will take to improve morale. To this should be added a commitment to increased communications.

A few suggestions to consider:
— Establish corporate officers as required by bylaws
— Encouraging people in staff meetings to express what they are enthused about as well as what worries or bugs them.
— WEC project will change office (new employees, more office space, money) We need to plan to be ready to grow.
— Editorial seems to be looking forward to new projects. This work is life blood and chance to grow.
— People dealing with the day to day financial realities are worried, and frustrated, fearful that not enough is being done, that we're not circumspect.

And indeed it is a difficult time. We are experiencing growth pains. And indeed it is a time of opportunity.

**WHAT I BELIEVE I HAVE TO OFFER**

My immediate concerns need to be:
—continuing fundraising planning
—Whole Earth Catalog development
—board development
—increasing and maintaining communication with staff.

Maybe my strengths are my limitations. What I was hired to do is what I believe I can do well, work towards developing new projects. Make presentations to and seek information from publishing houses and other appropriate sources. Take part in the negotiation of contracts, interface with the companies with whom we take on projects. Assist in thinking about and following up on promo and marketing campaigns, helping the right hand know what the left hand is doing. Continuing talks with multi-media connections and foundations. Be a tool available for the fund-raiser for presentations as well as ongoing planning. Keep informed of staff needs in working with each other and with outside people. Trying to help create consensus in the organization when possible. Searching out and meeting with potential board members and advisors. A major part of my job, as I understand it, is working with Howard on envisioning appropriate projects and helping follow through on them.
Looking after our interest in the WELL. The WELL needs to grow if it is not to be left behind. The way in which it chooses to grow is very important. I have been a major part in discussions of this (and other)

decisions. The WELL can be, if appropriately developed, a cash cow for Point and can serve us well in other ways. It is a major part of our plans for developing content and promotion of the Catalog project.

To fulfill the type of functions listed above I cannot be the detail person who oversees the day to day functioning of the organization, although I must know its needs. It has been and continues to be my hope that Keith and I can work together, learning from mistakes, overcoming differences, making improvements, augmenting each others strengths and shortcomings. His grasp of the history of WER and the realities and pitfalls can help us accomplish much. I can't do my job without someone covering that job. I hope it can be Keith.

Because of my Mother's continuing medical conditions I will have to return to the St. Louis area periodically ( about four times a year). When there I am available by phone, and when we can afford a portable computer, on line. This responsibility is simply a fact.

I believe we are going through growing pains. These are difficult beginnings, we need to discern if the projects are worth the effort. In any case it seems that having high quality new product out there will give us the chance to grow.